



United States Department of the Interior  
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Fire Management Branch  
National Interagency Fire Center  
3833 South Development Avenue  
Boise, Idaho 83705



February 24, 2011

To: Fire Management Coordinators, Regions 1-8

From: Chief, Fire Management Branch *Brian McMan*

Subject: Medical Standards Program – National Extension of Arduous Wildland Firefighter Incident Qualification Cards and Program Update

The following guidance supersedes previous FWS 30 day redcard extension guidance identified in the December 01, 2010 Memorandum; *Update to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service implementation of the DOI Wildland Firefighter Medical Standards Program*.

The Department of the Interior, Medical Standards Program (DOI MSP) initiated a contract in January, 2010 with Medical Development International (MDI) to provide medical examinations for wildland firefighters. Due to the recent decision to suspend additional task orders with MDI for contracted medical examinations, and the associated delays in implementing revisions to the wildland firefighter medical standards program, a national extension of Wildland Firefighter Incident Qualification Cards (Red Cards) will be granted effective through May 4, 2011. This extension is valid for all arduous duty firefighters employed by FWS who were cleared and qualified for arduous duty during the 2010 fire season, excluding firefighters currently in the "not cleared" status. Fire Management Officers have the responsibility to exercise discretion if concerns exist for an individual's ability to safely perform the duties of an arduous wildland firefighter.

The extension will be accomplished through a national change in the "Fitness Expiration Date" within the Incident Qualifications and Certification System (IQCS) to reflect the extension date of May 4, 2011. Firefighters who were in "pending further evaluation" or "not cleared" status in the MedEx system on February 17, 2011 will also be extended in IQCS. It is critical that Fire Management Officers ensure individuals in these categories DO NOT participate in arduous duty activities until the items resulting in the "pending further evaluation" or "not cleared" notices are resolved.

Other major components of the DOI-MSP, such as the Risk Mitigation/Waiver process, are still in effect.

Additional program specific guidance to be implemented immediately includes the following:

- Do not attend any physical examinations previously scheduled by MDI.
- Employees who have received an exam through MDI and were waiting on a clearance determination may continue to operate under a valid red card based on the extension described above.
- Exam status determinations of "Cleared" or "Not Cleared" made by MDI are valid. Employees in the "Not Cleared" status may not participate in arduous duty wildland fire activities until they are granted a Risk Mitigation/Waiver document, or until they are transferred from "Not Cleared" to

"Cleared" based upon further medical information provided under the revised process that will be forthcoming in early March.

- The National IQCS change will have no impact on those individuals who had an exam and took the Work Capacity Test (WCT) prior to February 18, 2011, or those whose fitness expiration date is after May 4, 2011.
- For new hires, a tentative job offer can be made, but an Enter on Duty Date (EOD) cannot be offered until an examination determination is made utilizing the revised examination process that will be in place in early March.
- At this time, a Health Screening Questionnaire (HSQ) is not a valid option for attaining arduous duty clearance.
- This Memorandum does not affect Refuge Law Enforcement Officers who take the Refuge Law Enforcement Medical Exam in lieu of the Arduous Wildland Firefighter Medical Exam. These individuals will continue to follow the protocol for WCT administration and redcard qualification set forth in [242 FW 4, Exhibit 2](#).

Additional information pertaining to individuals who have already entered into the MDI exam process, but had not received a clearance determination prior to the ending of the task order will be addressed in DOI MSP's revised process scheduled for distribution in early March. The DOI MSP is working diligently to make every effort possible to ensure an efficient transition during the implementation of the revised process.

Questions regarding this extension or other aspects of the DOI Wildland Firefighter Medical Standards Program should be directed to National Fire Operations Program Leader Chris Wilcox at: (208) 387-5599, or [chris\\_wilcox@fws.gov](mailto:chris_wilcox@fws.gov).

cc:

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